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PHOTO STORY no. 26

TREES COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN THE SELLING PRICE OF YOUR HOME

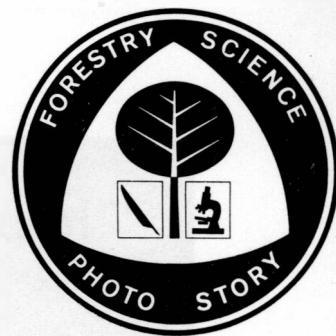
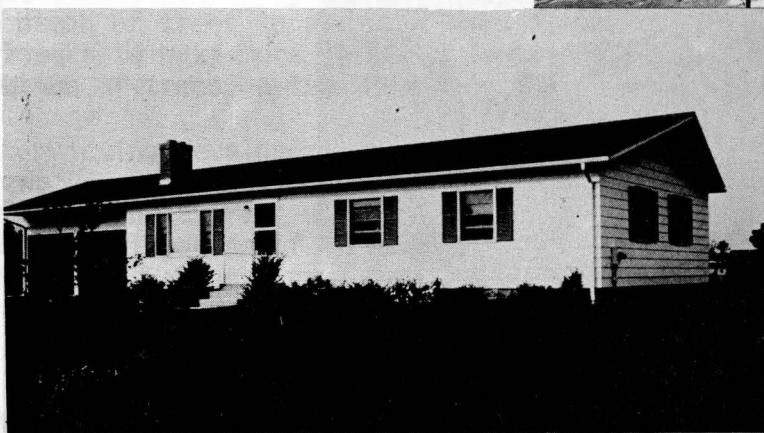


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The houses pictured are identical in architecture. Yet the one on the right sells for \$4,100 more than the one on the left. The reason? *Trees!*



A tree in your yard may be money in the bank -- so say the realtors and property owners polled recently by Forest Service environmental researcher Dr. Brian R. Payne of Amherst, Mass.

Payne found that the presence of trees around a house appears to have a tangible effect on its marketability. Trees may enhance the value of a property by more than 15%, with an average increase of 5 to 10%. This translates to a \$2,000 to \$10,000 jump in its selling price.

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Identical Houses, But. . .

Forest Service researchers presented 50 sets of photographs like these to a group of 9 realtors, and asked them to appraise the properties. In nearly all cases, trees increased the selling price.



To arrive at these figures, Payne collected photographs of nearly 800 properties in the \$35,000 to \$75,000 price range in the town of Amherst. From these, he selected about 200 and grouped them into 50 sets containing three to five pictures of houses that were architecturally similar, but different in the degree of surrounding vegetation.

After preparing identical architectural descriptions for the houses in each set, Payne presented the sets to realtors in towns near Amherst and asked them to estimate the selling price of each property. In most cases, the experts assigned higher selling prices to the properties with more trees.

Payne also presented the photographs to local homeowners and asked for a value estimation. Homeowners' replies were nearly the same as those of the experts.

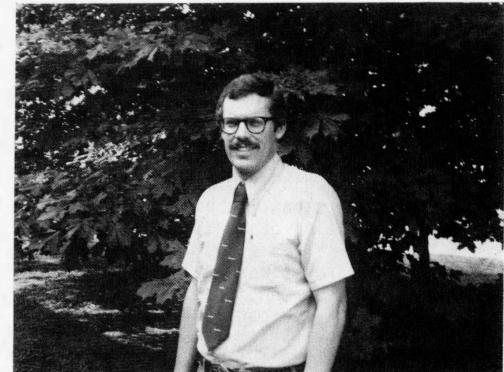
This research was undertaken to establish the contribution trees make to residential property values. Their exact influence on the selling price of a house has long been unknown.

Trees offer both benefits -- beauty, shade, habitat for birds -- and detriments -- leaves to rake, damage to pipes and paving. Dr. Payne's study makes it possible to synthesize these diverse effects to estimate the net contribution of trees to property values. It enables residential property developers to make more informed decisions concerning the destruction or preservation of trees on the land they are developing.

By interviewing developers who had saved trees during housing construction, Dr. Payne found that their extra costs varied from \$200 to \$2,500 per lot. The average was about \$700 per lot. Actual costs depended on the number and location of trees saved, but on the average the value of the trees saved was about five times as great as the cost of saving them.

AVERAGE REALTOR VALUES:

1. \$57,900 ; \$68,100 (A 17.6% increase in the selling price with trees)
2. \$44,200 ; \$46,800 (A 5.9% increase)
3. \$40,200 ; \$42,800 (A 6.5% increase)



Dr. Brian R. Payne, an urban forestry researcher for the Forest Service in Amherst, Mass., with a homeowners' best friend - a tree.



At the outset of the environmentally-conscious Seventies, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service launched a new research program at its Northeastern Forest Experiment Station to deal with the forest-related environmental concerns of urban areas—especially those of the highly urbanized megalopolis of the northeast.

Within the framework of the Urban Forest Research Program, the Forest Service joined with nine northeastern universities to form a consortium for environmental forestry studies.

Research by both Forest Service and university scientists aims to develop information and techniques for helping urbanites understand the need for urban forest environments. This same information will help provide a basis for policy formulation, regional planning, and land management in and around population centers.

Initial research toward determining how trees and forests can best service urban man's needs is concentrating on (1) past, present, and future land use and how trees determine residential property values; (2) ways to obtain both quality water and recreation from municipal watersheds; (3) effects of disposing sewage in forested areas; (4) techniques

for inducing appropriate non-game wildlife species into urban and suburban areas; (5) the recreational value of forested areas near urban centers; and (6) how trees and forests can help reduce noise levels.

Studies that will result in genetically superior vegetation for areas of high use and abuse are also planned. Other studies will be designed to develop the best management measures for modifying climatic extremes and intangible aesthetics.

Besides conducting a variety of forestry research studies at over 75 locations all around the country, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service cooperates with state agencies and private forest owners to stimulate proper management practices and to protect the 440 million acres of their forests against fires, insects, and diseases.

The Forest Service also manages 187 million acres of public land, including 154 National Forests and 18 National Grasslands in 43 states and Puerto Rico. Each National Forest resource -- timber, water, forage, fish and wildlife, and recreation -- is managed to produce a harmonious environment along with tangible benefits for all America's people.